

MEDIA RELEASE ESPLANADE

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ARTS & HERITAGE CENTRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 20, 2007

ESPLANADE ARCHIVES DATABASE NOW SEARCHABLE ONLINE

Medicine Hat – The Esplanade Archives announces the launch of its searchable online database at www.esplanade.ca/archives/archives.html. This program brings the resources of the Esplanade Archives to your home, your classroom, or anywhere an internet connection is available.

The searchable online holdings include descriptions of the Archives collection as a whole and access to the map collections, hours of audio-visual material, almost 50,000 photo descriptions, and over 4,000 photographs that are scanned and viewable online.

"We are striving to make the history of Medicine Hat easily available to the people of Medicine Hat. The databases contain the culmination of over a quarter century of archives collecting, and the amount of information, such as descriptions and scanned images will increase regularly," says Philip Pype, Archivist at the Esplanade Archives.

The website also features nine interactive, web-based exhibits that provide unique insight into the stories of the history of Medicine Hat and area, such as the struggles of the early hospital, or tales of serpents and gunslingers.

The Archives also incorporated interactive features allowing viewers to comment and become involved in the ongoing development of the collections and exhibitions.

"Viewers can actively participate in their own history by commenting on what they like, what they want to see more of, order copies of photographs or other materials, or even help identify unknown people or things in our photographs," adds Pype.

"The web-site has been running for about a year, but with recent additions of exhibits, thousands of images, and many other improvements, it is time to let the people of Medicine Hat know it is there," says Carol Beatty, Manager of Cultural Development for the City of Medicine Hat.

Funding for the development of the interactive exhibits was provided by Medicine Hat and District Historical Society. Interactive exhibits were created by Brian Gale, BDG Productions, and Esplanade Archives staff. Database content was provided through thousands of hours of volunteer and staff time over the past 25 years.

Visit www.esplanade.ca/archives/archives.html.

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